

**West Virginia Legislature
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE**

**FINAL REPORT
to
Joint Committee on Government and Finance
2013 - 2014 Interims**

Members

Senate

**Senator Ron Miller, Chair
Senator Bob Williams, Vice Chair
Senator Bob Beach
Senator Sam Cann
Senator Daniel Hall
Senator David Nohe
Senator Dave Sybolt**

House

**Delegate David Walker, Chair
Del. Mike Manypenny, Vice Chair
Delegate Bill Anderson
Delegate Ray Canterbury
Delegate Allen Evans
Delegate Nancy Guthrie
Delegate Lynwood Ireland
Delegate Carol Miller
Delegate Brady Paxton
Delegate Dave Pethtel
Delegate Randy Swartzmiller
Delegate Danny Wells
Delegate Larry Williams
Delegate Roy Cooper
Delegate Ryan Ferns
Delegate Harry Keith White
Delegate Joshua Barker**

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met each month during the 2013-2014 period beginning in June 2013 to discuss and study agriculture and rural development issues. The topics assigned to the committee by the Joint Committee on Government and Finance were as follows:

**Nontraditional Agriculture and Agri-tourism development
Feed to Achieve and senior vouchers for locally-grown foods
Discussing Hybrid Cooperative Association law
Development of a “West Virginia-homegrown” brand for local foods**

	Update fencing laws
SCR35	Aging Watershed Dams and Channels
SCR46	Distribution of power to rural communities
SCR47	Cultivation of meat processing industry

JUNE 2013

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met on Friday, June 21, 2013 at 8:30 a.m. in Wheeling, West Virginia. Chairman Miller briefly described SCR35 (study of West Virginia's aging watershed dams and channels) and the six watershed projects to be visited on the tour. Brian Farkas, Executive Director, West Virginia Conservation Agency, presented aging dam infrastructure issues in the Wheeling area during the all-day tour.

JULY 2013

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met on Wednesday, July 24, 2013 at 1:00 p.m. Brian Farkas, Executive Director, West Virginia Conservation Agency, spoke on aging dam infrastructure issues. Brian Long, Program Manager, Dam Safety Program, DEP Environment Enforcement, addressed questions regarding the Dam Safety Program.

AUGUST 2013

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met on Tuesday, August 20, 2013 at 5:00 p.m. The issues were urban agriculture and nontraditional agriculture as a means of economic development. John Porter, Extension Agent, Agriculture and Natural Resources, WVU Kanawha County Extension Service, spoke about the Kanawha Urban Agriculture Alliance, development of a property on the West Side to be an urban farm accelerator with leasable space and an educational component, the SAGE program, a collaboration with the Charleston Area Alliance, and recent urban agriculture ordinances in Charleston. Carl Chadband, Chief Operating Officer, Kanawha Institute for Social Research and Action, Inc. (KISRA) spoke on the growing jobs project that puts unemployed men from inner city areas back to work in catering and gardening jobs.

SEPTEMBER 2013

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met on Tuesday, September 23, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. Paul Beatty, West Virginia deer farmer from Harrison County, discussed the regulations associated with deer farming, and the testing required for deer. Dr. Jewell Plumley, State Veterinarian, discussed the diseases that are required to be monitored and the vaccinations and medicines required for deer.

The Chair proposed a study group be established to study small meat processing markets and regulations in the state. Senators Williams, Sypolt, Beach and Miller and Delegates Manypenny, Guthrie, Canterbury and Walker were assigned to the study group.

OCTOBER 2013

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met on Tuesday, October 22, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. Brian Farkas, Executive Director, West Virginia Conservation Agency, discussed updates regarding conservation dams, ownership, easements, costs and repair timetables.

NOVEMBER 2013

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met on Monday, November 18, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. The issues to be discussed were small farmers, locally grown foods and SCR47 relating to the meat distribution industry. Mike Kwansnieski, Charm Farm in Beverly, WV, provided the farmer's perspective on the challenges with meat processing and the potential economic benefits. Dr. John Keeney, WV Department of Agriculture, Meat and Poultry Division, answered questions and discussed meat processing regulations in West Virginia. The working group on the meat industry concluded its study, did not find any means of addressing the issues legislatively, but will continue to work with interested parties for solutions.

DECEMBER 2013

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met on Tuesday, December 10, 2013 at 4:00 p.m. Jill Young of Value Chain Cluster (VC2) Initiative, discussed the VC2 Initiative, its three year time frame, the seventeen counties that are eligible for assistance, and the need for a lasting program in the state. Steve Weir, Executive Director, Greenbrier Valley Economic Development Corporation, discussed economic development that emphasizes agriculture in the Greenbrier Valley area, and reiterated the need for continuity with the VC2 program.

JANUARY 2014

The Agriculture and Rural Development Committee met on Tuesday, January 7, 2014 at 3:00 p.m. Scott Chambers, Manager, Region Support, Storm Restoration, and Steve Stewart, Director, External Affairs, American Electric Power, discussed the restoration process and answer questions with regard to SCR46.

Your Committee **RECOMMENDS** that it continue to study issues related to Agriculture and Rural Development.

Respectfully Submitted,

Senator Ronald Miller, Chair

Delegate David Walker, Chair